

**CAPITOL/DOWNTOWN
CENTRAL CORRIDOR TASK FORCE
NOVEMBER 14, 2006**

MEETING NOTES

Task Force

Members Present: Mike Burns, Kristina Smitten, Craig Lien, Larry Englund, Kim Hyers, John Bennett, Ta-coumba Aiken, Paul Mohrbacher, Jerry Hersman, Deborah Rathman, Steve Schmidt, Diane Thormodsgard

Task Force

Members Absent: David Lanegran, Rhys Ledger, Pat Lamb, Phil Mason, Susan Rani, Jose Gonzalez, Michael Noble

Guests Present: Jim Barton, Linda Jungwirth, Ruth Blackman, Robin Caufman, Jeff Peltola

Staff Present: Jess Rosenfeld, Lucy Thompson, Paul Mandell

Welcome and Introductions

Co-chair Kristina Smitten welcomed task force members, who introduced themselves. Guests were also introduced.

Review of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Review of Meeting Notes from October 17, 2006 and October 26, 2006

The notes for both meetings were approved as written.

Review Task Force Meeting Schedule

Lucy Thompson reviewed the revised schedule. The next meeting will be Thursday, November 30, 4:30-7:00 p.m., and it will be a joint meeting with the University Avenue Central Corridor Task Force. The consultants will attend as well. Thompson handed out a new schedule and apologized for any confusion that last-minute changes may have caused.

Review of Draft Vision, Principles, Strategies

Jerry Hersman stated that he felt the second Public Open House went very well, and that he is impressed with the level of detail coming from the consultants.

In general, the task force felt that the draft Vision and Principles do a good job of capturing the ideas of the task force and its constituents. Larry Englund commented that they speak of a "corridor," but that downtown is not really a corridor in the same sense University Avenue is. The density and proximity of development to the LRT line in downtown make it more of a neighborhood or series of urban villages at nodes/stations, rather than a linear corridor.

On the draft strategies, the task force had the following comments.

1. There was a fair amount of discussion about how to prioritize the 84 (or 33 in the Capitol/Downtown segment) strategies. Kristina Smitten responded that, as a first run, the task force could organize the strategies by the seven key issues it has identified for the Union Depot to Rice Street segment. The task force agreed that this would be a good way to organize the list. The strategies could then be prioritized by period of implementation (e.g. pre-construction, during construction and post-construction).
2. Perhaps developers should be consulted as to where they would like to see stations, based on where they see a development opportunity.
3. Lighting should be emphasized more – both street and architectural (building).
4. A strategy should be added that talks about safe, convenient, aesthetically-pleasing connections between the LRT line and the bus transfer stations at 6th/Cedar and 5th/Minnesota.
5. Strategy #77 regarding Union Depot should mention the opportunity to connect to other local transit modes, such as bikes and taxis. For example, Paul Mohrbacher asked how the streetcar (should it ever be implemented) would connect to LRT.

Alternative Downtown Alignment Options

Before completing its evaluation of the three alignment options between 4th/Cedar and Union Depot, the task force talked briefly about the one-way LRT loop proposed by Ramsey County Commissioner Bennett. The task force agreed that the loop should not be an LRT route, but that it may make sense to explore it as a feeder bus route. There was a recognition that such an LRT loop would not improve pedestrian circulation or provide economic development opportunities to the extent the Cedar/4th alignment would; both of these goals are paramount to the task force.

Kim Hyers handed out another alignment alternative (Seventh Place Pedestrianway) prepared by a student at the Humphrey Institute. Staff reiterated that this visioning process assumes the Cedar/4th alignment, and is not the appropriate venue for introducing new potential routes through downtown. If there is interest in promoting this (or any) new alternative, the originator should meet with Ramsey County staff.

In addition to the pros and cons identified at the October 17, 2006 meeting for the two Cedar-to-Fourth-to Union Depot alternatives, the task force identified the following pros and cons for the Cedar-to-2nd Street-to-Union Depot alternative. The entire set of pros and cons is shown below.

90 Turn at 4th/Cedar

Pros

- development opportunity
- visibility of route and ease of access – transit in street

Cons

- noisy
- impact on infrastructure (utilities)
- train speed is slower due to right-angle turn
- traffic disruption, congestion

Issues

- infrastructure under street
- ramp impacts

Diagonal Through 4th/Cedar

Pros

- development opportunity – placemaking
- number of stops decreased – connectivity (bus)
- aesthetically (better able to hide catenary wires)
- interior station opportunity, clear connection to skyway
- closest to RiverCentre
- less traffic disruption
- excellent access to buses at 5th/Minnesota, 6th/Cedar

Cons

- ownership
- infrastructure (utilities)

Cedar under Kellogg to 2nd Street to Union Depot

Pros

- ease of transfer between transportation modes (enter Union Depot at concourse level)
- eliminates traffic conflicts along 4th Street
- no utility impact on 4th Street (District Energy estimates this could save \$5 million, or 25%, in relocation costs)

Cons

- no connection to Robert Street and potential Robert Street busway
- eliminates some entries to the skyway along 4th Street
- pedestrian connections not as visible
- LRT is not visible
- could preclude major redevelopment of 4th/Cedar station
- don't get development impact along 4th Street (or, development opportunities could slow down)

Each task force member was then given an orange dot to vote for his/her preferred alignment. The 45-degree diagonal through the 4th/Cedar block got the most votes (8). The 2nd Street alternative was a distance second with 2 votes. It was decided to check with task force members who had RSVP'd that they could not attend to see what their preferred alignment is.

Key Redevelopment Sites for Task Force Discussion

Due to the late hour, this item was postponed to the December 5, 2006 meeting. Lucy Thompson handed out a set of questions in the areas of block pattern, land use, building form and public realm to help task force members think about key redevelopment sites along the route.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m. The next meeting will be Thursday, November 30, 2006, from 4:30-7:00 p.m. at the Central Corridor Resource Center, 1080 University Avenue (old Lexington Library). This will be a joint meeting with the University Avenue Central Corridor Task Force.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy Thompson
Senior Planner
November 17, 2006